

EXHIBIT 73

Declaration of Ronald F. Bilbao

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA
CASE NO. 1:14-CV-954**

**STUDENTS FOR FAIR
ADMISSIONS, INC.,**

Plaintiff,

v.

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH
CAROLINA et al.,**

Defendants.

DECLARATION OF RONALD F. BILBAO

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I, Ronald F. Bilbao, hereby make this declaration from my personal knowledge and, if called to testify to these facts, could and would do so competently:

Background

1. I graduated from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ("UNC-CH" or "Carolina") in 2010, and I majored in Political Science and minored in Social and Economic Justice. After leaving UNC-CH, I worked in-house as a lobbyist at the American Civil Liberties Union ("ACLU") in Tallahassee, where I worked on legislative issues. Following my tenure with the ACLU, I went to the Service Employees International Union ("SEIU"), where I represented doctors and nurses at a public hospital in Miami.

2. I am currently employed by the Florida Education Association, a state-wide teachers union, as a Legislative Specialist.

3. I was born and raised in Miami, Florida. My mom is from Venezuela, my dad is from Colombia, and my brother was born in Venezuela. I applied to Carolina because my brother was at the top of his class in high school and was accepted into Carolina and lots of other great schools. However, he was undocumented, and he could not go to any of the schools that he was accepted to since he did not meet the residency requirements for scholarships or in-state tuition. Since I was born in the U.S., I had the good fortune of being able to go to Carolina on a scholarship.

4. One of the reasons that I chose Carolina was because of the Carolina Covenant program. The Carolina Covenant provides eligible low-income students with grants, scholarships, and work study jobs so that they can graduate from Carolina debt-free. It has changed the game in terms of low-income students being able to attend Carolina. Before the

Covenant, low-income minorities mostly just had the option to go to community college if they could not afford the cost of college. In Miami, many Latinos went to Miami-Dade College. I was able to graduate from Carolina debt-free. The Carolina Covenant changed the course of my life and my career.

Experience at UNC-CH

5. As a minority student, I felt like a fish out of water when I arrived at UNC-CH. Hispanics are the majority of the population in Miami, but that is not the case in North Carolina or at UNC-CH. I did not really know what it meant to be Latino in a non-Latino majority environment until I got to North Carolina. In 2006, North Carolina's population was 4-5% Hispanic, and it doubled by 2010. North Carolina had the fastest growing Latino population in the country, as people from Mexico and Central America are settling in the State.

6. There are lots of cultural opportunities at UNC-CH, which enrich the campus environment. As UNC-CH already has the Sonya Hayes Stone Center for Black Culture and History, the Carolina Asia Center, and the American Indian Center, a Latino Center felt like the next logical step to support the changing demographics of the University and the State of North Carolina. The campus community was open to the idea.

7. In my four years at Carolina, there were two Chancellors, and they succeeded in taking the first steps towards opening a Center by creating the Latina/o Collaborative. The Collaborative is based on campus, provides cultural programs, and showcases Latino artists. It was fun to be part of this and to be someone who brought a different perspective and set of life experiences to a place that may have not been fully immersed in this emerging population and its culture.

8. I used to write a Daily Tar Heel (“DTH”) column about Latino perspectives and race. I had a lot of conversations at the time about the DREAM Act. Many of my columns were about people having to see immigration from their own perspectives and through their own experiences, but people also have to accept that people have been immigrating to this country for a long time.

9. I wrote a lot about my brother, who came to this country at age one. He speaks perfect English and won spelling bees as a student. The notion that he is somehow not an American is crazy to me. He knows nothing about Venezuela, the country in which he was born. It would be wrong for someone to say that he is not an American and that he should go back to his country—he is a man without a country. This idea causes some discomfort to some people who do not understand our family's experiences, but it was important for me to share our perspective and to foster a conversation about the realities of being undocumented on the University campus.

10. I received a lot of backlash from my columns in the DTH. People told me to go back to my country, even though I was born in America.

11. I ran for Student Body President during my junior year, and I came in third. I believe part of the reason was because people were not ready to have a Hispanic Student Body President. I felt that as the “Hispanic candidate,” I was expected to act a certain way. Minorities experience those kinds of microaggressions in various aspects of their life, but it does not mean it is not hurtful.

12. I was at campus when they tried to bring Tom Tancredo, a Republican politician from Colorado, to speak on campus. There were lots of protests from liberal groups saying that Tancredo promotes hate speech. I was a part of those liberal groups, but I felt the opposite way

than the protestors. I believe that free speech and diverse opinions make the conversation richer.

We do not stymie free speech in this country, we combat speech with more speech.

13. I was on the Chancellor's Committee about academic freedom and responsibility. Many conservative students said that teachers have liberal leanings, so the Committee did an analysis of whether faculty members were biased. The analysis found no direct evidence of so-called "liberal bias" but did find there was the "perception of bias" among some students and faculty, and that needed to be addressed. Instead of "academic freedom," there must be "academic responsibility" among faculty and staff to recognize that bias and teach both perspectives as much as possible. UNC-CH has always been a place that welcomes those conversations and lets students bring those issues to the highest level, including the Chancellor.

14. I took a few classes in the African, Afro-American, and Diaspora ("AAAD") Studies Department, and the students engaged in rich discussions about the new, emerging diverse population of Latinos versus the long-existing population of African-Americans. Diversity is not just about one thing. Experiences make the conversation rich—not just ethnicity or racial background, but how those experiences shape individuals.

15. I also took classes in the recently formed Latino Studies minor. I took a couple of classes, and while there were lots of Hispanic students, there were also white students who wanted to learn more about Latino and Hispanic culture. Not all Latinos or Hispanics have the same perspectives. I am Venezuelan and Colombian, while others at UNC-CH are Chicano, Mexican, Central American, Guatemalan, or Honduran.

16. I recall hearing that UNC-CH has students from 120 countries. That diversity is so beneficial, not in terms of whether you pass a test, but how you grow as a person -- which is really the purpose of going to college. Not everything you learn is in the classroom. The people

you build relationships with and the chance to learn from different people is what helps you build a career, launch a business, or become an entrepreneur.

17. It is a no-brainer that people benefit from learning from other people's experiences. This is important in the classroom but it goes beyond the classroom as well.

18. Cross-cultural understanding is hugely important. One of the most important aspects of my education was learning from and listening to conservatives. In other places, people have certain perspectives about the South that are all blown out of proportion. When you put conservatives and liberals in one place, they tend to figure out how to listen to one another. Every roommate I had was conservative, and we had conversations about issues, including immigration. Learning about my brother changed their perspectives, and understanding their backgrounds helped me see their arguments. For example, one roommate's parents were fourth generation farmers who feared that immigrants would take their jobs. This understanding helped me at the ACLU in representing people with other perspectives. This exposure to diverse viewpoints helped me when working with Republicans, and I have brought that understanding to my career.

19. I return to UNC-CH each Fall as a member of the Alumni Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity (ACRED) along with other alumni who represent diverse communities. The group tries to convey the feelings and experiences of minority and diverse alumni to University administration. We had these conversations with the Chancellor and we spoke to her about creating a Latino Center. We emphasized that having a Latino Center is a symbol that represents the University making a deeper commitment to the Latino community.

20. UNC-CH has done a really good job of making diversity a priority, but it certainly is not perfect. There were very few Hispanic or Spanish professors when I was at UNC-CH. To my knowledge, no one in the Chancellor's cabinet or on her senior staff is Hispanic.

Conclusion

21. With the changing population, diversity at UNC-CH is more important than ever. The diversity at UNC-CH truly mattered to me personally and greatly enriched my education. UNC-CH must continue its commitment to diversity for future generations. There are opportunities to improve and room to grow, and I hope UNC-CH will be permitted to embrace those opportunities.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on: 6/26/17



Ronald F. Bilbao